DIRECTOR'S CHAIR
In an exclusive interview, corporate leader Sue Clark, a director of Edinburgh Business School, shares her experiences of driving change in companies in international markets.

LEADING LIGHTS OF THE NORTH
Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon welcomes the Icelandic Prime Minister to Panmure House for a summit on wellbeing and economics.

ALL FIRED UP AND READY TO GO
Dr. Jens Ullrich, a DBA from Edinburgh Business School, examines the ethical compass at the heart of health and safety managers in European fire-fighting services.

LET THE DESERT SUN SHINE IN
Heriot-Watt's ESTEEM team rises to the Solar Decathlon challenge of designing and building a sustainable house in Dubai as part of EXPO 2020.

REVERED, REVIVED & REVITALISED
A stellar international gathering of historians and leading economic thinkers pays homage to Adam Smith, setting his work into an urgent, contemporary context.
A New Dawn for our Business School

Welcome to the fifth edition of Panmure House Perspectives, the international business magazine for Edinburgh Business School, Heriot-Watt University. We hope that whatever your connection with our University, you find something of interest in its pages.

This summer was a very busy time for everyone at Heriot-Watt engaged in teaching and research in the area of business and business-related subjects. At midnight on July 31st, we went through the legal formalities to merge the distance-learning activities at Heriot-Watt engaged in teaching and research in mainstream business education activities of Heriot-Watt University, and formed a new, much larger, Edinburgh Business School.

I have written in more detail about the new Business School and its mission and purpose on p.15, but in summary we can all celebrate the new dawn of business education and research at Heriot-Watt University.

As a University that was born in the place of business education and research at Heriot-Watt University, says Dr Graham Norris, a DBA from Edinburgh Business School, examines how organisations, are beginning to think through new ways to compete sustainably? Leaders have always had to change, leadership matters more than ever in times of political and economic turmoil. Governments and economies regularly experience turmoil but now, a new ingredient is being added to the mix in the form of the new narrative relating to sustainability. Leaders have always had to find new ways to compete but how do we find new ways to compete sustainably?

Several years ago, a colleague and I wrote a paper which defined the relationship between management and leadership as the relationship between the organisation of production and the production of organisation.

The 1st declaration of Panmure House urges ‘international leaders to base their policies and decision-making on a set of common principles, as expressed and formulated by Adam Smith, which cherish the required values of an ethically-based liberal democratic system, a moral commitment to the well-being of our communities and affairs responsibility to protect economic, political and social freedoms, use resources wisely, avoid unnecessary consequences, follow the rule of law, favour markets and prices as guides to resource allocation and take a long term view to the benefit of the next generation, public and private investments, to support inclusive economic growth and prosperity for all.’

The Panmure House Declaration was the first major pronouncement from Adam Smith’s home since his death in 1790, I believe that it sets out a clear vision first espoused by Smith, and still highly relevant in a modern 21st century context.

Adam Smith was in constant use over the summer as it welcomed visitors to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and staged no fewer than three different shows, sometimes all on the same day. John’s play, Adam Smith: The Invisible Hand, was reprised from 2018, it was a hugely successful public debate each day at 2pm, chaired by financial commentator Mervyn Somerset Webb and global economic commentator Dominic Frisby in relay, and Dominic also performed his ‘father of the fringe’ lecture on how Adam Smith forever the success of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

We also look forward to launching The Society of Panmure House, which gives members the chance to be invited to select gatherings at the house and to receive this magazine regularly. Please do get in touch if you would like to join us. For more details see p.15.

PROFESSOR ROBERT MACINTOSH, Head of School of Social Sciences, Heriot-Watt University, says leadership in the low-carbon economy requires much more open and wider engagement to ensure a radical change in behaviour.

be received wisdom is that in times of change, leadership matters more than ever. Even a passing familiarity with our immersive, rolling news coverage suggests that we are experiencing a period of significant political and economic turmoil. Governments and economies regularly experience turmoil but now, a new ingredient is being added to the mix in the form of the new narrative relating to sustainability. Leaders have always had to find new ways to compete but how do we find new ways to compete sustainably?

Several years ago, a colleague and I wrote a paper which defined the relationship between management and leadership as the relationship between the organisation of production and the production of organisation. It's more than just a play on words. Management matters because whether you are producing a physical product, new knowledge such as world-leading research or even something as ephemeral as a customer experience, the doing of things has to be organised. Leadership matters more because it involves shaping the processes of organizing and managing. Leadership gets really challenging when we face problems we’ve never come across before. Producing an organised response in these circumstances is a challenge. In most businesses we know how to organise production, even if we could do a little more efficiently. But how to produce in ways that are sustainable is a new and evolving type of problem.

Colleagues at Heriot-Watt, as in many other organisations, are beginning to think through a response to the climate crisis. As a university, some of our technological research might help produce dramatically more efficient and sustainable ways of producing energy, reducing consumption and improving sustainability. Sustainability is our special research strength. It might help encourage consumers to change their behaviours in ways which enable more sustainable modes of operating. Yet alongside these academic challenges, we cannot escape the need to think about the conduct of our day-to-day business.

There’s an urgent need to engage our community of staff, students and alumni in the process of rethinking the organisation of our products. Everything from the learner experience, to buildings in which we work and how we feed our staff and students is up for debate. If we, as a university, are to establish a carbon neutral model of operating well we’ll need to rethink every aspect of how we work. Getting staff and students into large lecture theatres is historically a core part of university life. Educational concerns about the effectiveness of the traditional lecture aside, there are ecological concerns about the carbon consequences of getting everyone to and from one of our campuses. A simpleistic response might be to imagine that new students, digital natives since kindergarten, might even prefer to be educated remotely. Yet, digital solutions deal with their own carbon challenges with some estimates that video conferencing produces a carbon price peak with the aviation industry as a source of emissions. A completely new way of thinking would be entailed in getting academic staff to design a learning experience that was educationally effective yet ecologically sustainable.

How then, do business leaders in every sector of the economy create the circumstances in which carbon neutral solutions can emerge? There are three things that help with delivering radical change, firstly, it is essential to engage openly and widely with the whole organisation, engage all stakeholders all the time and, no matter what else you can think of. Good ideas come from the strangest of places and engaged staff are most likely to find your radical ideas but with new ways of working if they’ve had a hand in shaping the solution. Get your ideas out to your colleagues and encourage the discussions. A few simple rules that cyclone ‘You can do anything you want as long as it does nothing to harm the environment,’ and ‘we’re more than just a business, we’re part of the community,’ are simple Chinese nationalisms with the rapid pace of change in Asia.

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Prince Edward launches MBA partnership in Malaysia

Prince Edward launches MBA partnership in Malaysia

by Adam Smith’s understanding of the wellbeing of society and its interrelation with the economy. Report by KENNY KEMP.

Scotland and Iceland Discuss the Feelgood Factor in Leadership

Prince Edward launches MBA partnership in Malaysia

The First Minister welcomed the Icelandic leader to Panmure House and says Adam Smith would greatly have appreciated the creation of an international network examining the wellbeing of communities and society.

The two leaders met on 30th April 2019 in Bute House in Edinburgh, before touring Panmure House and opening a meeting where delegates held the first ‘policy lab’ of the Wellbeing Governments’ Group, an initiative examining how inclusive economic growth can be measured alongside the experiences and living conditions of people and communities.

The Scottish Government are one of the main supporters of Panmure House, which is owned and run by Heriot-Watt University. The Scottish leader said he was inspired by the ‘beautfully restored’ venue and by the thinking of Adam Smith.

It is very appropriate that we’re gathered here in Panmure House - the home of Adam Smith. In his most famous work, The Wealth of Nations, Smith argued – among many other things - that a nation’s wealth is measured by its internal silver reserves – but by the total of its production and commerce.

That measurement, he declared, tells you where you are known as GDP. In the years since then – contrary I think to Smith’s arguments – GDP has often come to be seen not just as an indicator of a country’s wealth, but the main measure of its success.

‘Yet – following a decade of global economic turmoil – the limitations of that view have become increasingly clear. In the countries and around the world, there is a growing realisation that growth is not the only measure of a successful economy. And in fact in some respects it might not be the best measure of a successful economy. And in fact in some respects it might not be the best measure of a successful economy.

And while Smith’s work began the discussion of wellbeing, it is wrong that we should not give much greater priority to the wellbeing – and the quality of life - of people living in a country.’

The First Minister said the OECD has been hugely influential in promoting the idea of well-being throughout its support for the work developing the Better Life Index.

‘Here in Scotland, we have tried to embed the concept of “wellbeing” – in the work of government.

She went on to say: “I mentioned earlier Adam Smith’s The Wealth of Nations. In fact of course, Smith had written an earlier and to my mind equally significant work – The Theory of Moral Sentiments, in which he sets out the foundations for his moral philosophy. As part of that, Smith sets out his belief that happiness is achieved when “all the different faculties of the mind - that is to say, all the different ends and uses”.

So I think it’s fair to say that Adam Smith was an early advocate of the wellbeing approach to the economy and indeed that is the belief that underpins the work of this group.

Following the meeting the First Minister said it was a pleasure to host the Prime Minister at Bute and Panmure Houses. “Our countries have a long history of friendship, with many historic and cultural ties. It was an opportunity to discuss the many areas where we have shared ambitions and challenges, such as our desire to grow sustainable tourism and take action to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change.”

Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir said: “Iceland and Scotland enjoy a longstanding relationship. I am delighted that we are now collaborating on the Wellbeing Economy Government project, in which Scotland has demonstrated an important leadership.”

The First Minister again repeated how Adam Smith had influenced her thinking during the TEDSummit: A Community Beyond Borders, which came to Edinburgh from July to 25 July.

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Sue Clark does not shy from a business challenge - and she has faced many awkward situations over her varied career, after helping to build up one of Europe’s biggest beer businesses - including buying Peroni - she now has a portfolio of non-executive directorships, including as a board member of Edinburgh Business School. She talks to Panmure House Perspectives Editor, about her most challenging times.

Looking back, she recalls her time with the Scottish utilities, which is probably why she finds solace in the recreational activity of bee-keeping at her leafy home in Hertfordshire. Although being a keen apiarist and gardener may have more to do with a BSc degree in Biological Sciences, which she completed at Heriot-Watt University, she has enjoyed the buzz at a series of high-profile companies, which is probably why she finds solace in the recreational activity of bee-keeping at her leafy home in Hertfordshire. Although being a keen apiarist and gardener may have more to do with a BSc degree in Biological Sciences, which she completed at Heriot-Watt University.

“I think about my career, one of the themes – and I don’t know if it is lucky or unlucky – in that I’ve always worked in companies that have challenges or aren’t in the status quo,” she says in an interview with Panmure House Perspectives.

In a quick synopsis, Sue joined ScottishPower in 1992, just after it listed, worked at Railtrack and had to deal with the aftermath of railway disasters and investor meltdown; moved to beer-makers SABMiller, joining as it listed on the London Stock Market; while one of her first non-executive directorships was with AlcoHotel, which had fought off a hostile takeover battle. Today she sits on the board of Imperial Brands, the global tobacco business moving to next generation products, and Tulchan Communications, a financial communications outfit which works with many of the City’s leading businesses.

Looking back, she recalls her time with the Scottish utility, which is now part of Spanish-based Iberdrola, with immense pride. “I was there in the glory days of Scottish Power,” she says, cautioning herself that it might not be right to state this.

Yet there is no doubt it was a high point for Scottish business. Ian Robinson, later Sir Ian, was in the driving seat as Chief Executive with Ian Russell, the current chairman of the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland, as the Finance Director. Scottish Power, emerging from the South of Scotland Electricity Board, was the first public company to start, the consolidation among UK utilities after privatisation in 1990 and Sue Clark, who had worked with the Central Electricity Generation Board, joined as Investor Relations Director in Glasgow. Until then, there was a group of 13 regional electrical companies across the UK. Scottish Power bid for ManxElectric, buying that business in January 1996, opened the flood gates. The company moved into multi-utilities, buying Southern Water, created Scottish Telecom, which was later floated as BT, and then bought Pacificorp in Oregon, the US utility. Sue Clark made headlines for working to the end of her pregnancy and her daughter Lucy was born literally hours after sealing the US$4 billion deal. By 2000, ScottishPower had a market capital of around US$10 billion and a turnover of US$8 billion.

The business at the time was at the heart of the FTSE100 and we did a lot of things we were really proud of. During my time there, we were voted in The Times survey as The Most Admired Company in the UK. This focused not only on business performance but also on the work we were doing in the community and on sustainability.

It was a relentless job that was rewarding for a high-flying woman in her early 30s.

“The Scottish utilities got a much tougher deal than those in England and Wales and we had to work hard to get the investor community to understand the potential of ScottishPower. It was a surprise that we stepped forward and led the industry consolidation. The management team at the time was outstanding.”

MBA PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCOTTISH FIRMS

Her job was not without its challenges. A major substation explosion resulted in the death of two workers, then thousands of customers were cut off their electricity supply in a black-out during Christmas and New Year. It was Sue Clark’s job to manage the communications during this fraught period.

“Leading a key part of the organisation with Sir Ian Robinson leading the Government’s Welfare to Work initiative and establishing ScottishPower’s own learning and continuous training culture. This development in people led Sue Clark to undertake her MBA at Heriot-Watt University.”

“I came to do my MBA on the back of a ScottishPower programme which was part of a business-sponsored MBA. A whole cohort of ScottishPower’s management team was sponsored and went through the programme.”

Professor Keith Lumsden was running Edinburgh Business School at the time and her thesis was on the management of utility companies.

“The great thing was the way the MBA was structured, it was done in partnership with other Scottish companies. Students were working and learning at the same time. It is a model that worked for me because you can take what you are learning back into the business and vice versa. You were able to see the academic underpinnings of what you were doing at a corporate level.”

“After the birth of her second daughter, 11 months after her first, Sue Clark moved from ScottishPower to be nearer her own family in England. She joined Railtrack as a Director of Corporate Affairs.

The UK’s rail industry, also undergoing privatisation, was in a controversial state where the railway assets and stations were separate from the train operating companies, who were bidding for rail passenger franchises. However, there had been massive under-investment in the rail infrastructure for generations and Railtrack hit the news for all the wrong reasons.

“Railtrack was in the public eye. It was a very tough two years of my life. I arrived after the Ladbroke Rail Disaster [when 31 were killed and 400 injured] and then went straight into the Hatfield crash [29 killed and 70 injured] in October 2000. There were subsequently two or three other crashes.

“Moreover, Sue Clark also had to deal with the bereaved and the injured from the rail disasters.

“This was a very personal learning experience within business. I don’t think there are any right answers but it is very difficult when it comes to corporations showing compassion for those who have been bereaved or injured.

While the short-term grief and pain had to be managed, it is the longer term impact of survivor groups that was more difficult. “The reality is that you can’t give people what they really want, which is the return of loved one who has died in a rail crash, or their lives back to the way they were before. We kept working with people but it became clear we were not able to give them what they really wanted.”

As Head of Corporate Affairs, one of the biggest issues was managing the external perception, angry shareholders, and supporting the much-maligned Gerald Corbett and then Steve Marshall. After Hatfield, there was fresh investment in the railway which led to the closure of large sections for upgrade. Railtrack faced the lion’s share of public and press criticism, angry shareholders, and supporting the much-maligned Gerald Corbett and then Steve Marshall. After Hatfield, there was fresh investment in the railway which led to the closure of large sections for upgrade. Railtrack faced the lion’s share of public and press criticism.

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“I wanted to go somewhere that was fun, global and a lot less contentious.

Beer is a fantastic business because it is so social and it adds to people’s pleasure, if it is consumed properly.”
When I went on to run the European Group, that was always my favourite brand," she says. Clark loved her time running the beer business, and so did the major shareholders, who weren't going to get any money out of the deal. The Finance Director and Company Secretary took the top tier of managers during the nine-year tenure of departing Chief Executive Alister Cooper.

Sue Clark believes that if tobacco and alcohol are not run properly and responsibly then an illicit market develops which needs to be policed. She says: "It has been great to come back to Imperial Brands, once one of Glasgow's largest employers, but a very small team here in the UK that run the global business and I was an instrumental part in many of the acquisitions."
It’s called the ‘Solar Decathlon’ and takes place in the stifling heat of the Middle Eastern desert. The team that will represent Scotland and the UK in the event next year are not athletes in the conventional sense but a team of multi-disciplinary students from Heriot-Watt University. The aim is to harness their skills to design and build a solar-powered house that will stand the test of time and the scrutiny of a global audience. It will go on show at the World Expo in Dubai in November which is expecting to attract a tech-savvy and entrepreneurial crowd of more than 25 million visitors over six months.

If Heriot-Watt’s Team ESTEEM do well it will be the result of more than a year of graft and innovation by students who volunteered for the project and had their ideas incorporated into their university curriculum. For the University, the project pioneers a new way of learning that has more value for students who will eventually have to enter the real world of business, research and finance.

As Alex MacLaren, Associate Professor in Architecture and the project lead for Middle East Solar Decathlon 2020, explained: “This is a great example of how we can educate while applying research to a current project. The students have been massively inspired in a way that they might not have been inspired by traditional teaching. It opens up new ways of learning and gets students who might switch off in lectures to engage in something that feels really exciting.”

The Solar Decathlon is a joint venture between the US Department of Energy and Dubai Electricity & Water Company, part of the government machinery of an oil-rich emirate that nevertheless intends to be at the heart of finding new solutions to reducing the carbon emissions that contribute to global warming. Those solutions include solar-powered homes, which will have renewable fuel sources long after carbon-based fossil fuels run out.

Competitive teams are expected to design and build a grid-connected, solar-powered house and then build it and operate a prototype on the World Expo site. It’s a daunting and expensive project but one in which Heriot-Watt students have risen to the challenge. At the end of October, three Team ESTEEM representatives and undergraduate engineering students from the Edinburgh campus - Scot Calder, Jessica Haskett and Martin Juricek - were in Dubai to hear their efforts had already been recognised by Heriot-Watt becoming the only UK university to make next year’s final. ESTEEM – named from the first initial of the University’s six schools - will compete against 18 other teams from universities in China, the US, Taiwan and across the Middle East.

It’s a tough brief. The houses are to be designed to use solar energy as the only energy source and have to be equipped with all the technologies that permit maximum energy efficiency. In a competition within a competition, teams have to address 10 individual criteria - architecture, engineering and construction, energy management, energy efficiency, comfort conditions, house functioning, sustainable transportation, sustainability, communication and innovation, which will all be judged in the search for a winner.

The project began in earnest in March when applications had to be submitted and teams built from scratch. Professor MacLaren sought volunteers through the University’s internal communications network and assembled a core team of 15 from the various University disciplines. Altogether, 88 students have had an involvement, with all of them wanting to be intimately involved in the project and aware that it would become part of their course and integrated into the curriculum.

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Jeremy Watson is a journalist and former Chief Reporter on Scotland on Sunday. He was also the News Editor of The Times Scotland.
“Hackathons” were set up to brainstorm ideas and settle on a design capable of challenging some of the best and well-resourced houses in the world. Full debating and understanding what the judges are looking for (the Solar Decathlon brief is a 200-page document) was a major task in itself. Private sector sponsors, some supplying expertise, others giving financial support, were lured in. Among them were Scottish Enterprise - the Scottish Government’s business advice, support and funding agency, which recognises the important role that renewable energy will play in decarbonising the planet - as well as a range of energy-related start-ups with specific skills.

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE), one of the world’s leading plant research and conservation bodies, decided it wanted to help as well as showcase its own work in the Middle East. Its experts at the Edinburgh-based Centre for Middle Eastern Plants will guide the team on external landscaping that sets the house in context. Not only does the house have to function well, it has to look good.

Team ESTEEM got to work on the many challenges thrown up by the design of a solar-powered house that also had to interact with its surrounding environment. Some of the engineering students, for example, set about the task of developing the relationship between the house and low-carbon electric vehicles as part of the sustainable transport brief. Others put together a mobile workshop to allow them to help build the house themselves, instead of handing the project over to contractors.

One of the most challenging categories in which to impress the judges will be architecture. There is no point in designing a house that no-one will want to live in. Given that the Heriot-Watt team wanted their entry to be distinctive and that one of the World Expo themes is wellbeing, they decided on an element of ‘Scottishness’, despite the Middle Eastern setting and climate. The question is how bold and big-league stuff; other inventions that have debuted at World Expos include the telephone (1876), the cinema forever. There were lessons to be learnt on board. A Heriot-Watt team took part in the first Middle East Solar Decathlon in 2015 in a competition seen by a well-financed by Virginia Tech, the US research powerhouse. One problem for the Scottish team was that the air-conditioning system designed for their house was not working effectively. Unlike the one on site, they were marked down in the comfort conditions category.

This time all systems will be robustly tested before the house is despatched to Dubai for assembly. In addition, a mobile workshop will accompany the team to allow them to help build the house themselves, instead of handing the project over to contractors.

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All communicate with the concept of ‘wellbeing’, another of the underlying themes of the Expo. “The most efficient house would be a single-storey but that doesn’t talk about happiness or culture,” Professor MacLaren said.

The timber-frame house, once thoroughly tested, will be shipped in containers over six weeks - spending a further four weeks in customs - before being erected on the site of the World Expo, billed as the “greatest show on earth.” Currently under construction, one of the key themes is redefining “off-the-grid” with structures that generate their own electricity and water. It is big-leaguer stuff; other innovations that have debuted at World Expo include the telephone (1876), the ice cream cone (1904) and IMAX film (1975), which changed cinema forever.

Once built on the site near Dubai’s Al Maktoum airport – the team will have to finish off the architectural detail and the landscaping, with the help of RBGE. Their expertise lies in choosing plants that have longevity but also enhance the house’s surroundings while keeping (desalinated) water use to a minimum.

All of this has a cost. Virginia Tech’s winning FutureHUS entry in 2018 is estimated to have cost more than €1 million. Heriot-Watt’s entry that year - the ORAHouse (organic, resilient and adaptable) - cost £200,000, demonstrating that the playing field is not level in a competition in which there are no spending limits.

ORA was Heriot-Watt Dubai’s 2018 entry to the competition, so all images of the completed house and building site in the desert are from their 2018 activities, while ESTEEM are learning from this experience. Professor MacLaren estimates the cost of the 2020 project to be just over £700,000. Half of that has been raised through sponsorship but there is a pressing need to find the rest of the money. “It’s a huge and expensive logistical challenge to get the team out there, keep them out there and build the house to exacting standards,” she said, “which is where sponsors are important.”

“I would like to thank everyone for their support so far in this competition,” she added. “We are lucky enough to have more than 50 companies and organisations who have pledged to support Team ESTEEM but we are looking for more sponsors and collaborators for this next step. I would ask anyone who would be interested in supporting us to get in touch.”

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The new Edinburgh Business School looks to its global future

PROFESSOR HEATHER MCGREGOR, Executive Dean of Edinburgh Business School, announces a significant step forward for Heriot-Watt University’s ambition.

A birthday to remember – 1st August 2019 – the day the new Edinburgh Business School came into being. This new entity is the result of a merger between the business and business-related activities of the School of Social Sciences, and the distance learning activities of the iSchool Edinburgh Business School.

The new Business School will sit within the expanded School of Social Sciences, and I have been appointed as its Executive Dean, supported by a deputy, Professor Umit Uyar. We have seven subject areas: economics, accounting, finance, marketing, logistics, human resources and strategy & enterprise. Students at all stages (undergraduate and postgraduate) and modes (on campus, distance learning and with learning partners, and in the workplace) are supported. By uniting our faculty and students around the world on all three major campuses and with all our distance learning students, we are developing the resilient community that is part of Heriot-Watt’s Strategy 2025.

What will this mean for students, staff and alumni? Current students will be part of a wider community and have more opportunity for industry interaction both on campus and online through our new MBA courses. Staff will have the opportunity to learn more about different modes of delivery instead of being restricted to on-campus or distance learning. Alumni will continue to be part of the Watt Club community and can take pride on noting that the Edinburgh Business School name and brand will continue to be invested in.

We are setting out to be a Business School with 4 As – we want to be Applied, with strong industry and employability links, Accessible, so that people can study with us wherever they live and whatever circumstances or stage of life they are at, Accredited, as we continue to promote AACSB accreditation, and above all, Ambitious for ourselves, our students and our alumni. We are proud to carry on the heritage of Heriot-Watt University, which came into being in 1821, as the solution to one company’s productivity issues. As we approach our bicentenary we are proud to have a Business School that is truly fit for the future. ☝
Later in May there was a special prize-giving event as Edinburgh professor Sarah Picken, winner of the Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction, talked about her new book, Chekhov! History of a Tragedy, joined by Heriot-Watt University Principal Professor Richard Williams and Dr Tiffany Jenkins.

In June, Heriot-Watt professor Meredith MacCallum-Valer showed that flying high is in part all of the Adam Smith spirit. She led an Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council workshop entitled Flightplan for Sustainable Aviation, during which experts gathered to examine carbon-free supply chains and future technologies.

In July Panmure House was buzzing with animation and activity during its first major international conference, The New Enlightenment, which transformed Edinburgh into a two-day hub of economic debate, with delegates from around the world coming together to map the way forward for democracy, economy, and society. Many of participants signed the First Panmure House Declaration, urging international leaders to “bear their policies and decision-making on a set of common principles, as espoused and formulated by Adam Smith” which cherish liberal democracy and social and economic freedoms. It was a superb event, covered in detail by our special report on pp. 10-11. In the month, HRH Prince Edward, the Earl of Wessex, visited Panmure to discuss the expansion and benefits of the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme, and we were delighted to show him our newly-signed Declaration.

In August, The Edinburgh Festival Fringe at Panmure 2019 was a huge success. More than 3,300 tickets were sold across three hit shows. Our play Adam Smith: The Invisible Hand brings to life Smith’s fifth-century travels and asks what would happen if his imaginary lost papers were found today. While The Butcher, The Brewer, The Baker... and the Convener revisits his tradition of enlightened and, at times, light-hearted debate at Panmure. In September, our Doors Open Day welcomed the Edinburgh public to Panmure. Despite seasonal rain, we were visited by over 300 people in just four hours, demonstrating a great appetite from the local community for interaction with the building and its new life.

In October, Mr Yukata Harada, senior member of the Policy Board of the Bank of Japan, visited us to deliver his insights on quantitative and qualitative monetary policy, low interest rates and the banking system, in a session that took place under the Churchill House rules.

The YEAR AHEAD 2020 is set to be as vibrant and entertaining, with the launch of our Inspirational Alba lecture series in January. I am delighted that our first speaker is Andrew Gilmour, former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Head of Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in New York, who will be discussing his 50-year career in the United Nations.

We will also begin our Hutson seminar series — named after Adam Smith’s close friend James Hutson, the father of modern geology – which aims to engage industry, NGOs, government and the public in open discourse around the increasingly urgent areas of energy, climate change, and the use and availability of resources.

AND DON’T FORGET The Society of Panmure House is our new annual membership platform for all those interested in the intellectual life of Adam Smith and society. Many of our former members signed the Declaration, urging the world coming to Panmure House to map the way forward for democracy, economy, and society.

We are delighted to announce that The Society will be a membership platform supporting the work and the mission of the House.

You can join The Society of Panmure House in a variety of ways, including:

• Access to exclusive online content including live-streamed and recorded lectures, events and podcasts.
• Invitation to a special annual Society gathering within Panmure House.
• Inclusion in a ballot to win tickets to attend Adam Smith Lecture delivered by a Nobel Laureate or leading specialist at Panmure.

The membership benefits you will enjoy when you join The Society of Panmure House include:

• Digital subscription to the Panmure House Perspectives online magazine.
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Follow us on social media for updates on all the above as well as other exclusive benefits.

If you are interested in becoming a member please email panmurehouse@hw.ac.uk, or send by normal mail:

FAO Caroline Howitt, Edinburgh Business School, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, EH14 4AS.

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In honour of Adam Smith’s work and time at Panmure House, we have created and registered the official Panmure Tartan. Designed exclusively by House of Edgar, it features the symbolic colours of blue, derived from the Kirkcaldy coat of arms and the Heriot-Watt crest; green, taken from the colours of the restoration of the House; Marled Grey, drawn from the Douglas clan (the maiden name of Margaret Smith, Adam’s mother); and Gold & Red, the autumnal golden and berry tones of Kirkcaldy, featured in the Smith and Douglas tartans.

These scarves are available in 100% lambswool at £25 each. To arrange your purchase, email panmurehouse@hw.ac.uk.

JOIN THE SOCIETY OF PANMURE HOUSE

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FAO Caroline Howitt, Edinburgh Business School, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, EH14 4AS.
A special international gathering of historians and leading economic thinkers paid homage to Adam Smith, setting his work into an urgent, contemporary context.

KENNY KEMP, Panmure House Perspectives

Revered, revived and revitalised

A stellar international gathering of historians and leading economic thinkers paid homage to Adam Smith, setting his work into an urgent, contemporary context.

JOHN KAY’S PLENARY SESSION

He introduced Professor John Kay, celebrated writer, Financial Times columnist and visiting professor of Economics at London School of Economics, whose analysis of the means of production could have been a Lallan or lowland Scot, born in Edinburgh, rather than a-killing-wearing Hielan man, introduced the failed pin factory, a starting point in Smith’s Wealth of Nations, which was a linear and repetitive means of production. This was a brilliant foundation for what was to follow.

Whether Smith had even visited the pin factory which he wrote about so eloquently, it is impossible to know. Kay suggested a better example for Smith’s analysis of the means of production could have been the great Carron Ironworks, near Falkirk, making cannonades for the British Royal Navy in the mid-18th century which was likely to be the biggest industrial factory in Europe – and therefore in the world – in its day. Kay raised a canard that Smith had plagiarised the work of Adam Ferguson, another revered Scottish economist and historian, who wrote his essay before Smith, and used the tale of the pin factory. Indeed there had been a shift between Ferguson, a former student of Smith’s, and his case study appears to have been taken from a French book some years earlier. He lauded remarkably that such economists should get out on this.

But Kay took us on a journey which was more than parochial economic history, it was an exploration of modern thinking and how the Modern Corporation operates. He spoke about the building of the Airbus A380 super jumbo jet and its
complexity of construction, not with a single individual capable of understanding every component of it, like knowing all of the parts of a Boeing 747.

"It is an immensely complicated product and there is no one, literally no one, who knows how a Boeing 747 is built. But 10,000 people working together, do know how to build an Airbus."

This avian levitation showed how collective knowledge and manufacturing processes have evolved in the past 200 years since the jet factory. On its run through post-war economics, it talked about the importance of scientific management, and how Peter Drucker and economic thinkers had used General Motors, the iconic American car maker, as the shining example of the Corporation. Business was General Motors and Ford, both models of linear, repetitive processes, and the conventional wisdom was such techniques of production could be applied to any manufactured product. Nobel Prize winner Milton Freidman opined nasidity in the 1970s by declaring the underlying social responsibility of business was to maximize profits for shareholders. While Kay spoke about the organisational development of the American conglomerates, Drucker moved on his narrative, leading to Sir Sigma, which was about eliminating waste in the manufacturing production, he was keen to take the audience into the more modern world, from what he called "axiomatic rationality" to "evolutionary rationality."

This was today's world of high-speed, face interaction and I make more progress on my research time at the Googleplex in Mountain View, where many Google employees are situated in one place? Presumably, he proposed, visible proximity is important today. But their Liverpool had more success on the field because they played as a team, rather than as a group of highly-paid individuals. And so the idea of teams being more than the sum of its parts was deeply relevant to the modern, complex processes of building an Airbus. A Corporation. Common human leverage was the difference between winning and losing, and the profitability of businesses where competitive leverage was in its extreme was identified as Winner Takes All.

On his storytelling excursion, we heard about the equation of money spent by leading English soccer clubs on buying players versus success rate, pointing out that Manchester United and Liverpool were by these strategies. But their Liverpool had more success on the field because they played as a team, rather than as a group of highly-paid individuals. And so the idea of teams being more than the sum of its parts was deeply relevant to the modern, complex processes of building an Airbus. A Corporation. Common human leverage was the difference between winning and losing, and the profitability of businesses where competitive leverage was in its extreme was identified as Winner Takes All.

In dissecting this thesis, Barry Eichengreen said Kay's argument was that the 21st century Corporation was characterised by teamworks where decisions were taken and tasks executed by groups or collections of employees; where it was a repository of collective knowledge generated by individual workers and dependent on evolutionary rationality which utilised adaptive capabilities.

"However, Eichengreen, professor of Economics and Political Science at Berkeley, questioned how many of these characteristics were distinctive purely in the 21st-century Corporation because Nelson, Winter and Chandler in the 1960s and 1970s, who were writing about industrial dynamics and how knowledge is acquired by the process of training that were changing.

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“We can stabilise the West so it is better able to weather China.”

We could solve that and make the average American wealthier, because we all agree the solution here is revolving around the issue of income inequality of the US where if we got the totalitarian Chinese system which is also a system with imbalance. Perhaps one of the reasons why we are not going to have some bifurcated or trifurcated trading system. But the real question is where is the leadership going to come from?

So I think we might end up with some bifurcated or trifurcated trading system. But the real question is where is the leadership going to come from?

“Happiness. “And we can’t forget that.”

Rosen spoke about the lack of middle-class support in democratic societies for major impact on competition with all G7 nations experiencing China, India, Indonesia, Poland, South Korea and Thailand, in 1990, which has gradually opened up for them including trade liberalisation, global value jobs towards lower, value-added production efficiency view with a perspective on innovation. In Smith’s defence, he and defines China to this day. It is very important to understand how economic theory has changed since his time.

If you look at China, many windows of opportunity have been closed. There are protections on technology, the literature of economic growth, we need to have an international debate about the trade rules which should be adopted in this new world where science, technology and innovation have become so important,” he said.

He said there needs to be better ways to protect intellectual property of companies, including university research contracts, and that there is an issue of the purchase of high-tech property of companies, including university research contracts. Public opinion is strongly against foreign companies being allowed to destroy the economic base of any country. Furthermore, to deal with Chinese competition, the liberal economies must invest in education, training, supporting R&D, halting China from stealing IP, directing financial resources into innovation, and protecting intellectual property. Gordon Brown, who had been at the forefront of resolving the global banking crisis, blamed the over reliance on “efficient” market theory, which became part of the “Washington Consensus,” although it is not supported by the present incumbent in the White House. The over-emphasis of efficient markets at the expense of innovation and education was unfortunate. Brown reminded the audience that Adam Smith, who grew up in the coastal Scottish community of Kirkcaldy by the sea, regarded his Theory of Money as a more important book than Wealth of Nations.

He had his idea of the circle of empathy, this idea that a community had obligations to each other and as a result of that you would support some forms of public services and the circle of empathy would move outward so people would come to see themselves not just part of a local community but an international one.

He said Adam Smith required this to have a moral underpinning which the market did not itself generate, hence Smith’s enthusiasm for education and public goods. The circle of empathy could perhaps look at how we can stabilise the West so it is better able to weather China.

“This was due to a loss of competitive advantage elsewhere and a change in competitiveness of firms in the US.”

But the real question is where is the leadership going to come from? Do we have some bifurcated or trifurcated trading system. But the real question is where is the leadership going to come from?

We are living through one of the most dramatic periods of world economic history.”

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Ann Harrison reminded the audience that the Haas business school in California has been established by the Americans for a similar purpose of generation earlier. She said the world was disintegrating because there was not enough high quality jobs and therefore there needed to be more investment in education, human capital and infrastructure.

Joanne Shelton, of the University of Montana, and a former Deputy Secretary General of the OECD, in response to Professor Rose’s most illustrious students, Weijian Shan, who said: “We are now in a world where globalisation is so badly managed and co-ordination between governments is so poor and meetings, such as the G20, are so empty of content that we need to be hopeful in the hope in international economic cooperation and have retreated into national slums as we see in China and India. Perhaps the real questions are how to make the American economy which is the system with imbalance.

Jeffrey Rosen, deputy chairman of Lazard, said: “The fact is that the two largest economies of the world are now working outside the WTO (World Trade Organisation), so we might end up with some bifurcated or trifurcated trading system. But the real question is where is the leadership going to come from?”"
He said that Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader, who is an advocate of socialism, has two million Twitter followers whereas Boris Johnson, the contender for the UK Premiership, is new to social media with 600,000 followers, which is less than a third of America's.

Ferguson pointed out many people are unaware of the history of socialism in the 20th century and the whole idea has got lost in translation. He pointed out that as an historian, socialism is about the state owning the means of production and distribution. To do so, they must curb personal freedoms and the rule of law. He pointed out that educators have failed to properly explain how socialist ideas led to disorder and widespread lawlessness and he cited the carnage in places such as Venezuela to make his point.

The key issue here was that we need to focus on, and it’s a timely thing to focus on given the events in Hong Kong, is so much democracy. He said that Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader, who is an advocate of socialism, has two million Twitter followers whereas Boris Johnson, the contender for the UK Premiership, is new to social media with 600,000 followers, which is less than a third of America’s. Ferguson pointed out many people are unaware of the history of socialism in the 20th century and the whole idea has got lost in translation. He pointed out that as an historian, socialism is about the state owning the means of production and distribution. To do so, they must curb personal freedoms and the rule of law. He pointed out that educators have failed to properly explain how socialist ideas led to disorder and widespread lawlessness and he cited the carnage in places such as Venezuela to make his point.

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Peter Schwartz said Donald Trump had turned electoral politics into reality TV and the United States no longer has a centre of government, but a reality show with a vote at the end of it. He said Trump was probably the biggest single individual force undermining the rule of law in the United States today. However, he said the failure of socialism was nothing to do with Ronald Reagan’s nuclear defence build-up but the chronic state of the Soviet economy which collapsed and led to the end of the Cold War.

SARAH WILLIAMSON’S PANEL

For the session, FCLT Global CEO Sarah Williamson, who had co-chaired the World Economic Forum’s Annual Meeting in Davos in 2018, said: “So the massive challenge for the capital markets is how are they going to raise, at the heart of the future of the liberal capitalist system. ‘Free markets’ and ‘limited government’ are the great ideas that Smith bequeathed us, not only the invisible hand but the hardware.’”

Sarah Williamson, speaking at FCLT Global’s Edinburgh Event, joined Hamish Brown, editor of the Financial Times, to discuss how we build a future centred on the four simple principles — selflessness, social freedoms, use resources wisely, avoid unintentional harm — which he said was a starting point and would be refined at the annual Panmure House Declaration.

Harold James agreed with Schell about concerns over the future of the Cold War. He said: “The world is uncertain, and China is a central worry. The Sino-American rivalry is at the heart of the future of the liberal capitalist system.”

European countries figure out a way to finance and solve this problem, or will it take substantially.

The closing plenary

In the final act, ProfessorFinance Professor Edinburgh School of Business, who spoke about an investment advisory firm in which he has a personal stake, said: “Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of doing what you have already achieved the highest level of play they could have dreamed of.”

“Think big on your table has just arrived, and political implicit preference for software over institutional hardware.”

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European countries figure out a way to finance and solve this problem, or will it take substantially.
Dr Jens Ullrich faced a personal dilemma. Either he signed up for the Bundeswehr, the nation’s unified armed forces, for a year, or joined the part-time Freiwillige Feuerwehr fire service for seven years. He chose the fire brigade and served his time in the local community dealing with house fires, traffic accidents and woodland blazes.

The grounding gave him the basis for his Heriot-Watt University DBA thesis from Edinburgh Business School which finds that a manager’s feelings of moral and ethical responsibility play a more important role in corporate Health and Safety management than previously thought.

Moreover, many companies ignore health and safety regulations and ‘the power of formal rules’, and rely on individual approaches when protecting people who are in harm’s way.

“Health and Safety management is very important in firefighting because it is a dangerous job. I used to be a part-time firefighter in my 20s in Luneburg in Northern Germany. In the city there was no professional fire department, so we did everything besides our jobs. We had to take care of ourselves,” he says.

There are few professions which take Health and Safety more seriously than firefighting. Each day they face a raft of risks and they must be prepared to deal with the unexpected. In his research, Dr Ullrich conducted confidential studies across 12 fire departments in Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. His thesis — Managerial Motivations for Varying Health and Safety Management Practices — investigates both informal behaviours and formally documented structures and processes.

Why did he think this was a suitable subject for a DBA?

“About six years ago, when I started this research project I was made the managing director of a power generation subsidiary. Suddenly I was responsible for the actual situation, or they may even be entirely absent. In such contexts, rules often are not applicable due to the actual situation. The reactive phase represents a weak safety culture follow the same principle and ‘defines what people do when no one is watching.’

Moreover, many companies ignore health and safety regulations and ‘the power of formal rules’ and rely on individual approaches when protecting people who are in harm’s way. ‘This feeling of moral obligation was very clear in my study.’

THE SAFETY CURVE

Adam Smith spoke about a human moral compass acting properly when people were not observing. A good safety culture follows the same principle and ‘defines what people do when no one is watching.’

A concept of safety culture is the DuPont Bradley Curve, which distinguishes between four development phases of organisational culture and indicates the behaviour of managers, employees and contractors. According to the curve, any organisational safety culture has four development phases. The reactive phase represents a weak safety culture. Top management is hardly interested in the issue and relies on the safety instincts of workers. Compliance with laws and regulations is ensured by delegating tasks to safety engineers. The dependent phase of safety culture corresponds to the top-down management approach to H&S management. In this environment, top management deals with H&S issues, but focuses extensively on centrally defined rules, which usually means documentation which is invested in important health and safety measures always from managers and taking care.

A collaborative effort is the independent phase of safety culture, which distinguishes between four development phases of organisational culture and indicates the behaviour of managers and employees. According to the curve, any organisational safety culture has four development phases. The reactive phase represents a weak safety culture. The proactive phase represents a strong safety culture. Managers and employees work together, they are committed to ensuring good H&S conditions for their employees, but they over-emphasise rules and top-down decision-making. The independent and interdependent phases of the DuPont Bradley Curve refer to the modern approach of H&S Management Systems (HSMS). In both phases, bottom-up decision making is supported by good
AIMING FOR SAFETY FIRST AND LAST

Everyone must be able to trust that they can talk about events without being punished. In general, about 90% of all unsafe actions are more or less non-culpable and can be reported by the acting individual. A ‘learning culture’ is established by evaluating the collected information and disseminating the results within the organisation. Finally, a ‘flexible culture’ is needed to allow for unpredicted variations in H&S conditions. The academic theorist James Reason mentioned an example from firefighting in the United States where 13 firefighters died in the Mann Gulf forest fire disaster in 1949 because they ‘shoved the organisational instruction to keep their fire-fighting tools with them at all times.’ The survivors violated the rule by dropping their heavy tools in order to escape the fire.

The frequency of H&S inspections has generally decreased since enforced self-regulation was introduced across the European Union in the 1990s. Enforced self-regulation provides companies with the freedom and the duty to define their H&S management independently. Managers are allowed to develop their own technical and organisational solutions for H&S problems as long as the resulting risks for employees are acceptable according to generally applicable standards. Based on the new regulatory approach, and due to limited personal resources, regulators have shifted their focus from law enforcement to promoting awareness of H&S issues. Inspections are also difficult in the system of enforced self-regulation because authorities have only limited information about organisations’ risk assessments and safety measures.

However, only just over one third of companies in the European Union have their own staff conduct regular risk assessments. This is peculiar because the central idea of modern H&S management is that those who do the job are best qualified to evaluate risks. Employee engagement in the central element of modern H&S management. Due to historical and socio-political influences, there still exist considerable differences in the managerial approaches European countries.

In the three selected countries of this study – Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden – fire departments are municipal organisations that are free to decide making, especially in terms of H&S. They report to the cities’ mayors but are independent from the rest of the public administrations due to their distinct area of work. The commanders of the brigades and the H&S specialists advising them were therefore interviewed as representatives of top management. Additionally, organisational H&S documents were reviewed to investigate the individual management practices.

In each country, at least five organisations were interested in participating in the study. Geographic selection resulted in a regional diversity covering three federal states in Germany, four provinces in the Netherlands and three provinces in Sweden. In total, 15 fire departments were examined, of which two served as pilot studies, one was excluded because of its unusual context and 12 provided the data of the main study. Other European countries were considered not suitable for this study because either the organisational structure of fire services was not comparable or the number of organisations was very small.

The literature indicated that both public and private organisations could equally be expected to pursue a modern approach to H&S management. Thus, fire departments were considered a suitable example for investigating H&S management in general.

Employees’ personal commitment and knowledge and their individual recognition allows them to better deal with variations in their working environment.*

From a manager’s perspective, enforced self-regulation may be considered complex and ambiguous. Sanctions and demands by inspectors are not precisely specified in laws and rules, but depend on the circumstances. Organisations have the freedom and the duty to define their H&S management independently. Additionally, the regulatory environment of organisations is often inconsistent because several authorities are active in H&S regulation, resulting in rather confusing signals to managers. Also, market forces and industry culture affect H&S decisions. The resulting complexity creates insecurity and additional business risks as decision makers have no clear guidelines on how to act. Nevertheless, managers generally take their H&S responsibility seriously and are willing to invest in H&S measures. Most managers will engage with a consultation processes with employees and authorities if they become aware of non-compliance and if they feel authorities are being willing to advise. They make decisions based on legal, economic, and social context motivations. Regulatory activities affect these motivations, as do influences from peers, competitors, trade unions, the public and others. Accordingly, managers’ H&S motivations may be expected to be diverse.

AMENDING THE MORAL COMPASS

Why are managers willing to engage in H&S?

Generally, the decisions of managers affect the safety conditions in workplaces and determine the likelihood of harm to employees. This implies a moral and ethical question. Individuals may feel that avoiding harm to others is a universal moral rule, or they may consider hardship to be sometimes necessary to create business benefits. Though managers do not directly harm employees with their H&S decisions, they accept or reject risks to employees’ health when deciding on work processes and equipment.

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If you want managers to do H&S better, you need to allow them to undertake change projects that improve health and safety.

In the Netherlands, open and result-oriented discussions between inspectors and managers provided ‘moral and personal’ motivations that were more likely to implement effective H&S projects. By revealing this relationship between managerial motivation and management practices, the study makes a significant contribution to discussions on potential innovations in H&S law, regulations and industry standards. “Having identified moral motivations and ethical dimensions, we then explore effective change projects in the field of H&S, it is concluded that regulatory rules and practices should be adjusted. Scientists and practitioners alike should take into account that ethical decision making by top managers is an important aspect in promoting good H&S conditions for employees,” Dr Ullrich concluded.

Dr Ullrich has been able to share his findings with research institutions in Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. While the five fires represent that people prefer policies rather than rules, those who are associated with health and safety are now able to view this from the new managers’ perspective. “There is a need for information about Health and Safety from the managers’ perspective, and I think my HSE research project has been well received as far as possible,” Dr Ullrich said.

Accordingly, H&S management implies ethical decision making. The outcome of corresponding decision making is often determined by the manager’s ‘moral potency’, which comprises feelings of moral ownership, courage and confidence. If a manager feels the ownership and courage to decide and there can be a positive ethical outcome that would increase confidence and improve the manager’s future ethical decision making. This sense of moral responsibility motivates managers to take corrective action. There is empirical analysis that personal discussions are necessary in order to sensitise managers to the moral aspects of H&S management.

This idea corresponds well with the data of open and result-oriented discussions between fire inspectors and managers in Germany, who discussed the benefits of adjusting rules and practices so that regulatory rules and practices should be adjusted. Scientists and practitioners alike should take into account that ethical decision making by top managers is an important aspect in promoting good H&S conditions for employees, according to Dr Ullrich.

Omar Shaikh, managing director of Global Ethical Finance Initiative, based in Heriot-Watt’s Edinburgh Business School, says two leading Scots – Adam Smith and the Reverend Henry Duncan – remain the inspiration for the ethical approach of our financial system.

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This chapter with Dr Norris because it was simply repeating the situation he experienced at the first firm. This part was of phenomenon that now had a name: The Great Acceleration.

“Even although these Chinese workers were resilient and could roll with the punches a little bit, they wanted some continuity,” Norris says. All of this experience, prompted Graham Norris to dig deeper into what was happening. It became the seed of his Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh Business School thesis for a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) entitled Adaptability and Mindfulness of Chinese Knowledge Workers in Multinational Companies.

“When you look at China, people move around a lot. In a single life-time, people have gone through massive change from being peasant farmers in the countryside to living in a massive metropolitan city, all within a generation. Many people have had a bunch of different jobs. So it is quite amazing. You wonder to what extent can people tolerate this level of change?” Dr Norris remains full of admiration for the Chinese character but wanted to work out how this fitted with mental health and wellbeing, something he was increasingly interested in.

“In general, they seem to be doing quite well, because this level of change is normal for them. But it barely can be a toll (on some people) and I wanted to understand more about this,” he explains.

Mindfulness seemed like an antidote to the frenetic world of information overload and social media bombardment.

DEFINING THE KNOWLEDGE WORKER

Dr Norris concedes that the term ‘knowledge worker’ has no clear-cut definition and some academics have said the term is a buzzword and that it would be more fruitful to examine the ‘working knowledge’ of everyone in the workforce.

“The problem is that everyone is knowledge worker in some extent, as even routine work requires improvisation and judgment,” says Dr Norris. Yet the knowledge worker has become central to our global, technology-enriched world where the terms ‘white collar’ and ‘blue collar’ are increasingly outdated. Dr Norris deploys T.C. Dewey’s definition, namely: ‘Knowledge workers have high degrees of expertise, education or experience, and the primary purpose of their jobs involves the creation, distribution or application of knowledge’.

In China, the army of knowledge workers is now tens of millions in strength and expected to grow, based on the experience of the United States. As the Chinese economy continues to expand, this group will have an increasingly central role to play not just in China’s development, but in the world’s.

In the second half of the 20th century, China’s economy was not as large as the UK’s, despite having a population more than 10 times the size. Yet since 2005, China’s economy has expanded rapidly growing more than 500 percent over the following 10 years. This pace of technological change has created greater pressure on companies and their employees to adapt, and a failure to change can have drastic consequences.

The discomfort of rapid change creates psychological challenges which can impact on an individual’s ability to make effective business decisions.

"When I first arrived to work in China I was infected with the ‘live-fast, die-young’ get-going mindset and so I started to undertake a distance learning MBA at Herriot-Watt. It took me about three years. It seemed the case that you look forward to getting sandwiches and adaptability and flexibility in a changing environment.

To survive, individuals adopt a range of coping techniques derived from their own cultural background. These can impact on an individual’s ability to make effective business decisions.

The participants made associations with:

- Positive thinking: the questionnaire had been distributed in Chinese. The participants seemed to have the term ‘chesi rian’ in mind when discussing mindfulness. The association for one participant was: keeping oneself positive, looking at your weekends and spare time back when it’s over, but when I got my weekends back, I thought about doing a doctorate.’

They considered the options but the flexibility of the DBA at Herriot Watt allowed him to continue working in China, and his research topic began to crystallise.

Mindfulness seemed like an antidote to the frenetic world of information overload and social media bombardment.

A DEFINITION OF MINDFULNESS

The study explores change as it relates to Chinese workers in multinational corporations and how they adapt to these changes and the potential role of mindfulness in that adaptability.

But what does mindfulness mean in a Chinese context? The researcher explored the term with a group who agreed to undertake in-depth interviews about their psychological status.

Most interviews were conducted in English, but two were conducted in Chinese at the request of the interviewees. All were conducted in person and participants signed a consent form, with the interviews recorded.

It was also important to explore what the participants understood by the term mindfulness and its Chinese equivalent is zhihun rian.

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- The word being in particular was cited as having a positive connotation. Yet most definitions of mindfulness do not make this association; instead they emphasize awareness and not getting attached to positive or negative experiences.

- Religion, especially Buddhism: some participants recognized the religious background to the Chinese term for mindfulness.

- The standard mindfulness terminology of those who had been involved in the field of mindfulness, such as the terms and definitions.

- Those who said they were ignorant of the term, in either English or Chinese, until they had been contacted regarding the investigation.
Organisational change was most pervasive but its impacts could be positive as well as negative, especially where they changed the nature of work.

The results show that indeed, the Great Acceleration is being felt in China through rapid transitions in the economy and society, impacting the working lives of a sample of knowledge workers at multinational companies in China. However, the participants in Dr Norris’s study perceive the changes as having substantially different characteristics. Organisational change was most pervasive, but its impacts could be positive as well as negative, especially where they changed the nature of work.

Changes to relationships, on the other hand, were more often viewed negatively, most notably when it was the relationship with a supervisor that had changed. Many of the participants perceived change to be accelerating, in particular organisational change, suggesting cycles of transformational changes may be shortening so that they more resemble transactional changes. Moreover, technological change, which had been viewed as driven by organisation, is now being most keenly felt through personal mobile devices and social media such as WeChat.

RAPID CHANGE CAN DESENSITISE WORKERS

This suggests that accelerating change can blur previously identified boundaries, between major transformations and minor transactional change, and between work and personal lives, as both organisations and their employees become more fluid in their structures and relationships. By focusing in depth on a small number of participants, and their perception of how change impacts work, the development of the concept of adaptability gap suggests a more complex process is in play than that implied by the conventional stress-coping literature. Rather than simply being approached as threatening or challenging, the impact of change was judged across several specific dimensions. Some of these dimensions are related to specific changes – for example, where a relationship is broken and a new one required, a ‘support gap’ is created, says Dr Norris.

Several viewed change as an opportunity to be embraced. For example, change of any significance will most likely require the acquisition of more knowledge and the ability to comprehend what has been learnt, although these may not be the primary responses to the change.

A further finding from the present research was the emphasis some of the participants placed on experience in adapting to change. Rather than becoming entrenched in their comfort zones, some participants become desensitised to change and better able to adapt to it.

Dr Norris’s study demonstrates how elements of mindfulness can contribute to the ability of knowledge workers to adapt to changes in their working lives. While the possibility that mindfulness could aid in adaptability has been mentioned in earlier literature, this study strengthens the theoretical links and provides some empirical evidence of how specific mindful attributes can influence attitudes and responses to change.

In conclusion, Dr Norris says one of the challenges in studying mindfulness is to identify evidence of mindful attributes and actions on the part of the subjects, which would require a clear consensus on the concept of mindfulness which does not yet exist in business literature. This has given Dr Norris more food for thought and he is writing a book about how this might be addressed.

One of the conclusions I came to was that foresight is 90% of adaptability, which is what I’m working on now. If you can actually take a view of the future, and accept the fact that you don’t know exactly what’s going to happen, then you will feel much more confident about the future when it hits. And you don’t need to adapt to it because you’ve already considered, adapted and changed. One of the things people struggle with is looking into the future.

The Centre, costing £33 million, was opened in 2016, and one of Scotland’s largest indoor facilities.

33 SPORTING PARTNERS

The main sports hall has a 500 seat spectator gallery

The indoor pitch boasts a £3 putter and 10 IRB 22 standards

Scottish Premiership club Heart of Midlothian use Oriam for daily training

33 sports clubs use the Oriam sports facilities at Heriot-Watt

10 INTERNATIONAL ATHLETES

have recently used the facilities including Greg Laidlaw and Finn Russell of Scottish Rugby in preparation for the 2019 Rugby World Cup in Japan

Outdoor synthetic pitch built to FIFA 1 star and IRB 22 standards

The indoor pitch a

33 portable bleacher seats are an option in the main sports hall

THE CENTRE, COSTING £33 MILLION, WAS OPENED IN 2016, AND ONE OF SCOTLAND’S LARGEST INDOOR FACILITIES

Oriam [Scotland’s Sports Performance Centre at Heriot-Watt University]
“A society cannot subsist unless the laws of justice are tolerably observed, as no social intercourse can take place among men who do not generally abstain from injuring one another; the consideration of this necessity, it has been thought, was the ground upon which we approve of the enforcement of the laws of justice by the punishment of those who violate them. Man, it has been said, has a natural love for society, and desires that the union of mankind should be preserved for its own sake, and though he himself was to derive no benefit from it. The orderly and flourishing state of society is agreeable to him, and he takes delight in contemplating it. Its disorder and confusion, on the contrary, is the object of his aversion and he is chagrined at whatever tends to produce it.”

_The Theory of Moral Sentiments_, by Adam Smith, Third edition, 1767, Part 2. p 150